

Corridor Working Group Meeting – Meeting Summary

July 18, 2006

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

WSDOT Kent Maintenance Center
26620 68th Avenue South, Kent 98032**Attendees:****WSDOT**Ed Barry
Susan Everett
Carol Hunter
Ron Landon**King County**

Paul Takamine

EnviroIssuesLinda Mullen
Amy Turner**City of Kent**Tim LaPorte
Cathy Mooney**PSRC**

Charlie Howard

City of Renton

Keith Woolley

City of AuburnDennis Dowdy
Roger Thordarson**Pierce County**

Cindy Bui

PerteetTresia Bass
Jeff Lundstrom
Michael Stringam**Welcome and Introductions***Carol Hunter, WSDOT*

Carol Hunter, WSDOT, welcomed the group and thanked them for coming.

Carol passed out information regarding a request from King County Councilmember Julia Patterson. Councilmember Patterson wants to explore the benefits of adding ramps or improving the interchange between I-405 and SR 167, which is currently missing from the RTID project list. Modelers are using the regional VSIM model to determine if adding the ramps would benefit SR 167 or if putting RTID money toward HOV/HOT lanes would help more.

Carol shared copies of fairs and festivals summaries from the Puyallup Farmers Market (June 17), Kent Farmers Market (June 24), Kent Cornucopia Days (July 14) and Pacific Days (July 15). She noted that we've reached more than 300 people by going to the public instead of hosting open houses where we reached 19 people.

Approve June 20th Meeting Summary*Carol Hunter, WSDOT*

Copies of the June 20th meeting summary were sent to the partners via email before the meeting and a hard copy was provided at the meeting. Carol asked for comments on the summary and approved the summary without additional comment.

HOT Lanes Status Report

Jeff Lundstrom, Perteet

Jeff Lundstrom provided a brief update on the HOT Lanes Pilot Project. The project will be separated into two contracts: a Preparation of Final Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E) contract to install all of the signing, fiber optics and striping and a tolling contract for the tolling software and system. The PS&E is 60% complete and should be advertised in November. For the tolling contract, notification has gone out to most of the tolling contractors across the U.S. The RFP is being drafted internally by WSDOT and should be published in late July or early August.

The tolling contract will include some hardware, but mostly software development. WSDOT will use the same antennae as the Tacoma Narrows Bridge because the system must be universal, but the contractor will install them. It will take upwards of a year to write the software. The HOT lanes project is still on schedule for a potential 2007 opening date, but may open as late as spring 2008.

Susan Everett noted that violator fees would likely be split between local cities and the court system. Counties will only receive part of the fee if they have jurisdiction. The toll collection will cover the cost of enforcement. There are three types of fines for violators:

1. Single occupancy vehicle
2. Crossing the double white line
3. Violating HOV regulations

Discussion:

- Tim LaPorte, City of Kent, asked if the contract was design-build. Jeff said it is a design-bid-build contract, which is standard for WSDOT projects.

Stage 4/5 HOV Environmental Assessment

Susan Everett, WSDOT

Susan Everett, WSDOT, gave a brief update on the Stage 4/5 HOV Environmental Assessment (EA) project. She mentioned the team was struggling with the biological assessment and water quality. They are trying to be innovative and find land that is cost effective where they could replant the flood plain and put in some back pools for detention. Wetlands could also be created upstream to decrease the flow to the tributaries. The water table is close to the ground so flooding is an issue.

White papers will be available in mid-August. These papers will be presented to local jurisdictions for feedback. Construction may begin in 2009 but the project cannot be design-build because of the risk associated with the biological assessment.

SR 167 Corridor Plan, Environmental Assessment, and HOT Lanes Pilot Project

Discussion:

- Tim LaPorte, City of Kent, asked where the HOV extension might end and offered that there is a lot of information about the watershed basin. Susan clarified that the southbound HOV extension is from 15th St. NW to 24th St. and ends around the county line, which is primarily through Auburn, Pacific and Algonia and includes the SR 18 interchange bottleneck. Susan also mentioned that they are looking for innovative stormwater management solutions because vaults are expensive.

Preliminary Results of Transportation Modeling

Tresia Bass, Perteet

Copies of the PowerPoint presentation are provided.

Discussion:

- Cathy Mooney, City of Kent, asked whether there will be a TOT or HOT lane on the SR 167 Extension. If so, the HOT/TOT lane shouldn't be dropped at the 410 interchange. Susan clarified that the ultimate configuration of SR 167 has one HOT lane and two general-purpose lanes on the extension. Ed Barry, WSDOT noted that west of I-5, the extension only has two lanes to the Port of Tacoma.
- Jeff Lundstrom asked where the TOT lane would be located in relation to the HOT lane. Would it be on the outside of the highway so trucks don't interfere? Carol mentioned this issue was discussed at the last meeting and they decided to look into TOT lanes. Carol is pulling together a white paper to learn from other agencies that have implemented TOT lanes. She will bring this to the next meeting. Susan added that there is a lot of truck traffic in the Kent corridor. Most of the trucks on I-405 are doing local deliveries. After trucks leave the Kent area, they go to the Duwamish area. We have to pull all this information together to determine what benefits might come of TOT lanes. Carol noted that SR 167 is an obvious candidate for TOT lanes, but in other parts of the country, TOT lanes are used for longer trips. We'll learn more from other agencies before making recommendations.
- Paul Takamine, King County, asked if we would be modeling regional projects including I-405 together or using other RTID projects. He asked when the corridors merge together, how they are looking at the domino effect that is likely. Who looks at how all the projects fit together? Susan responded that they're not looking at the tri-county area, but they are looking at each corridor, corridor by corridor, with probable RTID money. She said they are looking at the connections and from the modeling, determining what gives you the best trip time change. Charlie noted that there was regional modeling during the last RTID funding exercise and that projects are required to come up with performance measures and the project benefits. Regional modeling doesn't give the level of data for operational aspects like local modeling and simulation does. For example, regional modeling wouldn't show the benefits of ramp improvements.

SR 167 Corridor Plan, Environmental Assessment, and HOT Lanes Pilot Project

Michael Stringam and Tresia Bass, Perteet, explained that M2 does travel demand forecasting but it diverts traffic to the shortest route. VSIM gives you an output from the travel demand model, which shows operational impacts in a local area including interchanges, intersections and small stretches of highway.

- Paul Takamine asked for clarification on Julia Patterson's request. Carol described the proposed RTID list for projects impacting I-405 and SR 167. Her request is to compare projects and performance to HOV northbound/southbound ramps on the connection between SR 167 and I-405.
- Michael Stringam mentioned the real chokepoint is getting onto I-405 northbound from SR 167. There are benefits for HOT lanes to 410, but this project should be considered before other improvements or we're moving people to the bottlenecks faster.
- Charlie Howard, PSRC, asked about re-engineering the I-405 ramp and what the cost was. Susan said the ballpark is \$450 million and it would have to be very long and go up very high. The ramp would be bidirectional and would have to be built past SR 169 on I-405 north. Paul noted this project should be a priority.
- Carol mentioned that extending the HOT lanes underneath the I-405 ramp would benefit the HOT and general-purpose lanes. HOVs have to merge but with improvements they could just use the HOT lane. This would reduce volume from the general-purpose ramp and save time for everyone. Charlie Howard noted the HOT lane would need to be extended north because one lane wouldn't accommodate the SR 167 single occupancy vehicle volume.
- Charlie Howard also mentioned that people should be open to thinking more systemically and reexamining the interchanges near Southcenter. HOV volumes on I-5 and SR 167 are low. Susan Everett mentioned the big plan is to have HOT lanes and HOV in both directions. Ironically, this is the only area with HOV ramps and the volume is low.

Next Meeting: 8/15/06, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

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